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Learning From Us?

The United States was treated to a little of its own medicine last week when Canada refused to admit a Minnesota professor for a conference at Winnipeg. The Canadians sent Prof. Mulford Q. Sibley back in the same plane that brought him, apparently because they feared that he would advocate violent overthrow of the government.

Sibley, a Quaker pacifist, once created a fuss when he wrote in the University of Minnesota student newspaper that the campus ought to have a couple of Communist professors, a "league for the overthrow of government by Jeffersonian violence," an anti-automation league, and societies to promote nudism and free love.

Some of these views are silly, but Sibley said he was only using the most "outrageous examples," to illustrate the need for a wide range of ideas at a university. Anyhow, the Canadian snub aroused Gov. Karl Rolvaag and Senator Eugene McCarthy to defend the professor, and Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson has promised an investigation.

SIBLEY SUFFERED more inconvenience but hardly more embarrassment than the famous Mexican novelist, Carlos Fuentes, who recently was denied a U. S. visa because he is on the blacklist of a section of the McCarran Act. This section applies not only to professed Communists and anarchists but to anyone "affiliated with" an organization that advocates Communist social, economic or political doctrines.

One can get off the list (as Fuentes was told) only by showing that for five years he has opposed the associations that got him on the list. This is not easy, even for those who might wish to recant, because the law forbids telling the victim what caused him to be blacklisted.

The ease with which one can make the list is shown by the case of Dr. Jaime Garcia Terres, a poet, philosopher and lawyer now an official of the National University of Mexico. His "crime," apparently, was membership in a group organized to protest the role of the United States CIA in overthrowing a freely elected, if left-leaning president of Guatemala in 1954.

WHILE BLACKLISTED, Garcia Terres visited President Kennedy and on another trip attended a conference in Chicago, but only because he traveled on an official passport. An immigration official inadvertently detained him on the second trip, and told him he couldn't travel in this country on a regular passport if he should ever attempt to do so.

That distinguished Latin-American scholars who may have said unkind words about U. S. foreign policy should be unable to travel in this country as private citizens is humiliating—not for them but for us. Canada's ouster of Professor Sibley may prove to have been the mistake of an overzealous local official. If not, it shows unfortunately that the Canadians are learning from us.